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Daniel, Jr. et al.

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[54] **MARKETING RESEARCH SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR OBTAINING RETAIL DATA ON A REAL TIME BASIS**

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[58] **Field of Search** ..... 455/2, 41; 379/92, 55; 358/84; 235/380, 381, 383, 385; 333/24 C, 254, 255, 260; 364/225, 226.3, 401, 402, 403, 404, 910, 918.1, 918.4, 918.5

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A market research retail sales data collection system and method includes a plurality of cooperating retail stores, each having an in-store device for automatically collecting processing and storing market research data in a substantially totally passive or non-invasive manner with respect to the on-going operations of each retail store. Each in-store device detects, interprets, processes and stores data on a real-time basis with respect to retail sales transactions occuring in the retail store. However, each such in-store device does not interfere with or require the active participation of the in-store Point-Of-Sale (POS) scanners/registers, POS controller or store computer controlling the normal operations of the retail store. Periodically, each in-store device transmits the data it has collected through a bidirectional comunications network to a central site. Each in-store device includes a non-invasive store loop sensor assembly, a sensor interface, a store loop communications adapter, a central processing unit, a random access memory, a processed data storage device, a power monitor and a communications modem for connecting the in-store device through a communications network to a central site. Each in-store device continuously monitors, detects, interprets, processes and stores retail sales transactions data from its retail store for subsequent transmittal to the central site. At the central site, the retail sales transactions data collected from each in-store device may be further processed and stored in any desired format for subsequent use by market researchers.

32 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets